

Application Topics / Draft

General Information

This Application is for the Pilot Project for Establishing Professional Learning Communities at Work™ within select Arkansas schools.

Contact Person

For questions pertaining to this application, please contact:

Tina Smith
Director of Policy and Special Projects
Arkansas Department of Education
Four Capitol Mall, Room 305-A
Little Rock, AR 72201
Tina.Smith@arkansas.gov
501-682-3667

Submission of Application

Application must be received by **July 14, 2017 at 5:00pm CDT.**

Applications can be mailed or sent electronically. **If mailed**, include one hard copy. If **sent electronically**, documents should be submitted as a Microsoft Word or Adobe .pdf file.

Documents should be double spaced and nothing smaller than 12-point font. While there is no page limit, applicants are encouraged to be clear and concise with responses to each question.

Hard copy applications should be addressed and sent to:

Tina Smith
Director of Policy and Special Projects
Arkansas Department of Education
Four Capitol Mall, Room 305-A
Little Rock, AR 72201

If sent electronically, email a MS Word or Adobe .pdf to:

Tina.Smith@Arkansas.gov

Timeline

Request for Letters of Intent to Apply	Released May 26, 2017
Letters of Intent Due to ADE	Friday, June 16 th , 2017
Release of Application	Wednesday, June 21 st , 2017
Applications Due	July 14 th , 2017
Evaluation Period	July 14 th – July 28 th , 2017
Notification of Award	August 1 st , 2017
Tentative Project Start	August – September, 2017

Please note that this program will not be in effect or funded until Act 427 takes effect on August 1, 2017, and emergency rules are promulgated.

Evaluation / Selection of Pilot Schools

Schools will be selected through a rigorous application and evaluation process, determined by a committee comprised of educational professionals knowledgeable of the Professional Learning Communities at Work™ process. Evaluation Criteria includes the following:

- Applicant Need / Opportunity
- Applicant Level of Readiness
- Applicant Evidence of Commitment
- Applicant Ability to Design Strategies for Sustainability

**Additional consideration will be given to ensure inclusion of a variety of schools with diverse demographics, locations, and levels of PLC implementation.*

The following sections of the application describe the project and include components that require the applicant to fully address. Please review the entire application closely.

Section 1: Purpose of the Pilot Project

Pilot Project

The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) and Solution Tree have established a partnership to develop and expand the Professional Learning Communities at Work™ process within select schools. These sites will serve as working laboratory schools for the PLC at Work™ process, conducting action research and sharing best practices with other schools throughout the state.

The Pilot Project will span a period up to five years, providing intensive training and support for a growing number of schools each year. Participating schools will be part of a collaborative evaluation process (Solution Tree and State Legislature/Agencies) that gathers data regarding student achievement, teacher practices, and effective professional development.

Intended Outcomes

The intended outcomes of the project include the following:

- Each school in the project will realize increased levels of student achievement through teacher collaboration, a relentless focus on learning, and a results orientation.
- Successful strategies (collaboration, assessment, RTI, instruction, engagement, etc.) will be identified and shared with other schools within the project.

Overview of the Project

Selected schools will be matched with a certified PLC at Work™ Associate from Solution Tree and receive intensive onsite support as they implement, deepen, and sustain the PLC process. Each school will create action plans that focus on increasing student achievement through aligned curriculum, formative assessment practices, and proven instructional strategies. The plans will be collaboratively developed based on a thorough needs assessment at the beginning of the project.

What Are the Key Components of the Project?

- Professional Development provided through a mix of onsite training, observation and coaching, and supporting print and video resources.
- All professional development provided by trained and certified Solution Tree PLC at Work™ Associates.
- An annual conference that highlights promising practices of the project schools and shares strategies.

- Schools will be selected through a rigorous application and evaluation process, determined by a committee comprised of educational professionals knowledgeable of the Professional Learning Communities at Work™ process.
- The Pilot Project starts with 8-12 schools in the first year, and adds an agreed-upon number of schools each year for five years to expand the effort and grow state-level PLC leaders.

What Can the Schools Expect?

- PLC Associates will spend up to 50 days onsite at each of the Pilot Project Schools. These days will be a combination of onsite training, observation, coaching, and other job-embedded staff development.
- Training will occur with building leaders, the school's leadership team, collaborative teams, and individual teachers.
- The schools will fully implement the three big ideas of a PLC at Work™ with fidelity with the guidance of a trained and certified PLC at Work™ Associate.

Section 2: Eligibility and Selection

Any K-12 Public School and Open Enrollment Charter School within Arkansas is eligible for this project. Multiple schools (small, rural) are also eligible to be co-applicants. Applicant schools can be at any point in their evolution of PLC implementation (not yet started, initiating, implementing, developing, sustaining).

The selection process involves the following

1. Applications Received by ADE
2. Selection Committee Review
3. Applications Evaluated and Scored
4. Pilot Schools Selected and Announced

Section 3: Contents of Application

The following is a list of information to be included in the written application (examples and explanations below bulleted list in section 3 and in section 4):

- Introductory Letter about the Applicant(s)
- Information Pertaining to Needs within the School
- Evidence of Readiness for this Initiative
- Evidence of Broad Commitment to this Initiative
- Applicant School Demographic Data, including:
 - Student Demographic and Performance Data
 - Teacher/Staff Demographic Data
- Full Applicant Narrative, including:
 - Statement of Need (include student/teacher/community demographic information, special challenges within school's community, other issues to be considered or addressed)
 - Intended Outcomes (general)
 - Reason for Applying
 - Unique Characteristics of School and Community
- Stakeholder Input and Commitment
- Demonstrating Promise and Progress
- Existing PLC Practices Already in Place
- Agreement to Adhere to Collective Commitments and Non-Negotiables of the PLC Implementation Process

3a: Introductory Letter

Applicants should include a 1-2 page narrative with the following information:

- Statement of Need (include student/teacher/community demographic information, special challenges within school's community, other issues to be considered or addressed)
- Intended Outcomes (general)
- Reason for Applying
- Unique Characteristics of School and Community

3b: Description of Needs

Applicants should describe current needs of the school, including what is being done to address those needs and the success of those strategies.

3c: School Demographic Data

Applicants should provide a complete view of the school's culture and surrounding community, including student and teacher information. The information may be gathered from existing sources (state data, etc.). At a minimum, information should include:

- Number of Students
- Student Demographics
- Free/Reduced Lunch
- Number of Teachers
- Average Tenure of Staff
- Community/Parent/Business Stakeholder Information

3d. Full Applicant Narrative, including:

- Statement of Need (include student/teacher/community demographic information, special challenges within school's community, other issues to be considered or addressed)
- Intended Outcomes (general)
- Reason for Applying
- Unique Characteristics of School and Community

3e: Evidence of Readiness for this Initiative

Applicants should address their level of readiness for the PLC Project. The school should consider the following when demonstrating their readiness:

- Current initiatives within the school
- Level of staff buy-in
- Existing PLC structures in place (established teams, collaboration time in the schedule, etc.)

3f: Evidence of Commitment for this Initiative

Applicants should address their level of commitment for the PLC Project. The school should consider the following when demonstrating their commitment:

- Level of staff commitment to project

- Ability and willingness to engage in intensive, onsite professional development
- Support from district and other key stakeholders (parents, community)

3g: Stakeholder Input and Commitment

Applicants should describe the level of input, involvement, and commitment from a variety of sources, including:

- Parent involvement? Community involvement? Business involvement?
- What is the level of support from their district?

3h: Demonstrating Promise and Progress (Capacity, Readiness)

Applicants should describe the current assets within the organization that will contribute to the overall success of this project (committed staff, existing PLC structures, etc.). Additionally, how will the applicant monitor and celebrate successes of this initiative?

3i: Existing PLC Practices in Place (structures, policies, strategies)

Applicants should discuss any structural, policy, or strategic components in place that contribute to the PLC framework or process (ex: schedules allow for collaboration, ready access to student data, existing team structures, strong building leadership team, etc.)

3j: Sustainability of the Work

Applicants should discuss their plans to sustain the work after initial intensive training and coaching. Considerations should include necessary ongoing professional development, strategies for continuous improvement, and building capacity among staff.

Section 4: Agreement to Adhere to Collective Commitments and Non-Negotiables of the PLC Implementation process

Applicants should review the commitments required as part of this project and address each one, culminating with a signature by both building principal and district superintendent.

Principal and School Commitment – The PLC at Work™ Process

Significant resources have been allocated to support your school and increase the learning opportunities for the students you serve. In order for this transformation to occur, it requires a total commitment by the administration and staff members at each school. It is important to establish clear and consistent expectations and priorities.

The following is a list of expectations for our work together.

1. Establish a Guiding Coalition

We will create a team of leaders to assist with guiding the process.

2. Build Consensus for the PLC process

We will work to educate others and build consensus for the process.

3. Complete the Foundation of the PLC Process

We will work with the Guiding Coalition and others to create a mission and vision, write value statements and construct goals that will support the implementation of the PLC process.

4. Create the Structures to Support a Professional Learning Community

We will create teams and the structures necessary for implementing a PLC.

5. Clarify the Work of Collaborative Teams

We will provide support for teams and assist with clarifying and supporting team products and processes.

6. Respond to Student Learning

We will support the staff in creating a Response to Intervention for students who are struggling with learning and those who already know the content being taught.

7. Shape the Culture of Your School

We will shape the school culture on the Three Big Ideas of a PLC: A Focus on Learning, A Collaborative Culture with Collective Responsibility, and A Results Orientation.

With a signature, we agree that this will be our guiding document as we work together.

PLC Principal (print)

PLC Principal (signature)

Solution Tree PLC Coach (print)

Solution Tree PLC Coach (signature)

School Commitments: The PLC at Work Pilot Program

1. The intent of this Pilot Project is to build sustainable PLCs. We will practice gradual release of responsibility as the school team deepens their PLC structures, and the school will create plans to sustain the PLC process after the Pilot Project has ended.
2. Part of sustaining the effort is ongoing, targeted professional development. Schools and districts will be encouraged to plan for continued teacher training and coaching after Pilot Project has ended.
3. There may be an independent evaluation of this PLC Pilot Project. All research protocols will be in place, and participating schools will be alerted should any evaluation be put in place. By submitting an application, the school agrees to be part of any evaluation that is established between Arkansas Department of Education and Solution Tree.

Principal Signature _____

Superintendent Signature _____

Please note that this program will not be in effect or funded until Act 427 takes effect on August 1, 2017, and emergency rules are promulgated.

END OF APPLICATION